



Oil and Gas exploration drilling rig, Lyngdal - Norway

VICI INTERNATIONAL AG - NEWS AND NEW PRODUCTS FOR 2020

It's all change for the high purity laboratory gas generator team at VICI International AG. Heinz Schmidlin, company founder and the mastermind behind many product innovations, will step aside from his role as CEO this year. Not through any reason of his own choosing – it's simply the way that Swiss law works. When he reaches that certain age, the king must make way for the prince. It's not a case of 'The king is dead, long live the king' because Heinz will still be working with VICI as an advisor for several years to come. So, who is the crown-prince? A Yorkshire lad by the name of Gerard Catchpole has been enthroned.



Copyright VICI AG Heinz Schmidlin & Gerard Catchpole (right)

Extensions to the laboratory gas generator range for offshore exploration

Writing on behalf of Petro Industry News, Stephen B. Harrison secured an interview with Gerard to find out what's new at VICI DBS and how the latest products will help the offshore sector find precious oil and gas reserves faster and more cost effectively. That should be handy, with the price of a barrel of Brent hovering around \$38 at the time of writing.

Gerard, how are you finding life at the helm of VICI DBS?

Thanks Steve. Well, I have been working with the laboratory gas generator team here for 4 years now. So, I've got a good idea of where we are heading and how I can continue to lead the growth and product development journey that Heinz has set us on.

Tell us more about some of the latest product innovations.

Two new rack mounted laboratory gas generators are getting a lot of interest from our customers at present. We developed them both with the offshore oil and gas exploration sector in mind.

And what are they, exactly?

The first, which we launched late last year, is a 19" rack-mounted high purity nitrogen gas generator which is ideal for FTIR or UV analysers. It uses a PSA system CMS (carbon molecular sieve) to achieve 99.999% purity. UV is great for total sulphur measurement which is a common requirement in the oil and gas sector.

More recently, we introduced a new 19" rack-mounted high-purity Zero air unit. The big step forward is that the air compressor is built in.

A built-in air compressor, why is that so important Gerard?

These lab gas generators are used offshore to feed a GC-FID flame. That's a sensitive instrument which helps the drilling team to analyse mud samples in real time and guide the exploration towards the richest oil and gas finds.



Copyright VICI AG 19 inch Rack Mounted Nitrogen



Copyright VICI AG 19 inch Rack Mounted Zero Air

The compressed air on the rigs is often wet or oily. This is exactly what the GC-FID does not want for the flame, so integrating an air compressor to make clean dry air in the Zero air generator means optimum analytical results day after day.

Your lab gas generators must be mission-critical on the rigs.

Indeed, they are. Without the analysis the drilling operation is just guesswork. And without the gases, there is no analysis. Most operators run two generators side by side, each one at 50% capacity. Then, if one needs servicing the other can ramp up to 100% until both are available.

Sounds good. And what about the digital revolution. Has that arrived at VICI DBS?

For sure it has. That's another area which is meeting the sweet spot of needs for offshore oilfield services companies. They run VICI hydrogen, nitrogen and air generators miles away from any service depot and getting spare parts to them is not so easy.

In the past, we could send our service teams out to the rigs. But with so many safety considerations, offshore training certification takes about a week and costs a lot of money. With the digitalisation of our equipment and modern communications possibilities, we can advise the offshore crew from the comfort of our offices and guide them through the steps required to conduct maintenance or change out the rack mounted unit.

We also use remote condition monitoring so that our expert service engineers can diagnose problems or anticipate maintenance requirements. That means that we can book spare parts onto the next helicopter or support vessel so that the technicians on board can service their gas generators before any minor glitches escalate to become failures.

Is it just the offshore market where digital innovations are popular?

They are also great for ambient air quality monitoring. Some of our high purity laboratory gas generators are used in environmental stations in the alps at high altitude in very remote locations.

You don't need an offshore safety certification to get there, but a good day's hike with a lot of kit in the rucksack might be required. And, if it's the wrong kit that you have been carrying -that can be very frustrating. So, with our digital condition monitoring systems, we can help the service teams prepare the right spare parts inventory to take with them.

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